

Is Janaazah Prayed For: The Early Foetus & Child Dying Before Puberty?

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Ruling

Praying janaazah for a dead Muslim is an obligation upon the Muslim community (fard kifaayah). The Prophet (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) performed it consistently, and commanded his companions to perform it on various occasions.

The janaazah prayer must be performed for every deceased Muslim, even if he was sinful or had committed innovations – provided that his deviation did not unequivocally take him out of the realm of Islaam.

Zayd bin Khaalid al-Juhanee (radiyallaahu anhu) reported that one of the Prophet's (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) companions died on the day of Khaybar.¹ When the Prophet (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) was informed of his death, he said, "Pray (janaazah) for your companion." Upon hearing this, the people's faces changed.² In explanation he (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said:

"Your companion has illegally taken some of the booty (from Khaybar)."

They searched his belongings and found some beads of the Jews that were not worth even two dirhams!³

Exception to the Ruling

There are cases where performing the janaazah prayer is voluntary (children and martyrs) or totally impermissible (disbelievers).

A CHILD DYING BEFORE PUBERTY

It is not obligatory to pray janaazah for the children who die before attaining puberty. The Prophet (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) did not pray janaazah for his son Ibraaheem. 'Aa'ishah (radiyallaahu anhaa) reported:

"Ibraaheem, the son of the Prophet (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam), died when he was eighteen months old; and Allaah's Messenger (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) did not pray (janaazah) for him."⁴

In regard to other reports mentioning that the Prophet (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) prayed for his son, al-Albaanee says:

"None of that is confirmed from him (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam). Even though those reports have independent isnaads, they are all extremely weak, as is

¹ A town to the north of al-Madeenah that was agriculturally rich, and was under control of the Jews before Islaam. It fell to the lands of the Muslims on 8H

² Since the Prophet (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) did not want to pray for him, the people understood that he must have committed a serious sin.

³ Recorded by Maalik, Ahmad, Aboo Daawood, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albaanee (Ahkaam ul-Janaa'iz 103)

⁴ Recorded by Ahmad and Aboo Daawood. Verified to be hasan by Ibn Hajar and al-Albaanee (Ahkaam ul-Janaa'iz 104)

discussed in detail in Nasb ur-Raayah (2:279-280). Ahmad (rahimahullaah) reported from Anas (radiyallaahu anhu), with an authentic chain, that he was asked if Allaah's Messenger (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) prayed janaazah for his son Ibraaheem, and he replied, 'I do not know.' Had he prayed, it would not have been unknown to Anas who served him for ten years.⁵

But even though it is not obligatory, it is permissible to pray janaazah for a child, including a miscarried foetus, as in the hadeeth from al-Mugheerah bin Shu'bah (radiyallaahu anhu) that the Prophet (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said:

"...As for a foetus, the (janaazah) prayer may be performed for it, and du'aa would be made that its parents be granted forgiveness and mercy."⁶

'Aa'ishah (radiyallaahu anhaa) reported that a (dead) boy from al-Ansaar was brought before Allaah's Messenger (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam), and he prayed janaazah for him. She said, "Glad tidings for this boy: (he will be) one of the birds of Jannah! He never did wrong, nor did he reach the age of doing it!" The Messenger (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) replied:

"Shouldn't you say something else 'Aa'ishah? Allaah (subhaanahu wa ta'aala) created Jannah, created its dwellers, and formed them in the back-bones of their fathers. He also created the Fire, created its dwellers, and formed them in the back-bones of their fathers."⁷

As for the reason that Allaah's Messenger (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) admonished 'Aa'ishah (radiyallaahu anhaa), an-Nawawee (rahimahullaah) said:

"There is a consensus among all of the worthy scholars of Islaam that the Muslims' children who die will be in Jannah. The interpretation of this hadeeth is that he prevented her from making a hasty judgement without an evidence, or that he possibly said that before he knew that the Muslims' children will be in Jannah."⁸

And as-Sindee commented on this hadeeth:

"He admonished her for affirming that a specific child will enter Jannah, because the truth of its parent's Eemaan is matter of ghayb known only to Allaah (suhaanahu wa ta'aala)."

AN EARLY FOETUS

Janaazah prayer may be performed for a miscarried foetus only if the soul had been blown into it, which occurs after completing four months. The prayer should not be performed prior to that, because it does not count as a dead person.

Ibn Mas'ood (radiyallaahu anhu) reported that Allaah's Messenger (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said:

"The creation of each one of you is brought together in his mother's womb for forty days as a seed, then as a clot of blood for a similar period, then as a morsel of flesh for a similar period. Allaah then sends an angel who blows the soul into

⁵ Ahkaam ul-Janaa'iz 104

⁶ Recorded by Ahmad and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albaanee (Ahkaam ul-Janaa'iz 73)

⁷ Recorded by Muslim and others

⁸ Sharhu Saheeh Muslim

it, and he is commanded to write down four things: its (future) sustenance, life span, deeds, and whether it will be miserable or happy.”⁹

Some scholars hold the opinion that the janaazah prayer may only be performed for a miscarried foetus that was dropped alive. They base their opinion on a hadeeth, “When a foetus is dropped alive, prayer may be performed for it, and it inherits.” However this hadeeth is weak.¹⁰

⁹ Recorded by al-Bukhaaree and Muslim

¹⁰ Ahkaam ul-Janaa'iz 106. Al-Albaanee indicates this hadeeth is authentic without the statement about the prayer (Irwaal Ghaleel no.1704)